

12 OCTOBER 1980

# Politics boils over into spy leak probe

By James Coates

Chicago Tribune Press Service

WASHINGTON—A spy drama that began with the arrest of a CIA agent under a Moscow bridge has split the United States intelligence community into feuding partisan camps.

Allies of President Carter and his Republican presidential challenger Ronald Reagan are trading charges that officials in both camps are leaking government security secrets to the media for political purposes.

The most bitter of these charges, leveled by foes of the White House, is that David Aaron, deputy director of the National Security Council, inadvertently exposed the identity of the most valuable U.S. spy in the Kremlin. That allegation was made by former CIA official David Sullivan.

The Senate Intelligence Committee is investigating how the spy was exposed.

REPUBLICANS HAVE also charged Aaron with leaking several other matters, including that he revealed:

- U.S. plans to use sites in Norway to monitor Soviet missile tests. Similar facilities in Iran were lost after the Iranian revolution.

- A similar plan to place listening posts and advisers in the Peoples Republic of China to monitor the Soviet tests.

- That the United States planned to use air base facilities in Turkey for spy flights in the sensitive Mideast area.

- The tightly held code name "Chalet" used in sensitive documents to describe the most sophisticated U.S. spy satellite.

- The existence of a top-secret program called Stealth, a proposed nuclear bomber that would be "invisible" to radar.

THERE ARE SIMILAR but not as numerous charges that foes of the Carter Administration leaked equally sensitive secrets.

The House Intelligence Committee is

investigating whether Rep. Robin Beard [R., Tenn.] leaked top secret data showing that the U.S. using spy satellites has detected Soviet efforts to use their missile silos to launch more than one rocket.

There also were charges that other Republicans, notably Sen. Paul Laxalt [R., Nev.], disclosed other secret data about Soviets breaking agreements made during the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks [SALT].

In addition, it has been disclosed that William Van Cleave, one of Reagan's top military advisers, was investigated for leaking arms treaty secrets during the Nixon administration and was found to have violated security regulations by photocopying key documents.

THE ALLEGATIONS against Carter's aide Aaron are contained in a list of questions prepared for Rep. Beard to ask him. They were obtained by The Tribune. Beard, an opponent of SALT, which is now before the Senate, had hoped to question Aaron before a House Armed Forces Subcommittee, but the White House invoked executive privilege and the questions were never asked.

Senate sources confirmed that the Intelligence Committee staff has asked the CIA and other intelligence agencies for reports about the cases mentioned in Beard's questions.

Aaron issued this statement Saturday denying he had leaked secret data:

"There is no truth whatever to these accusations. They represent a new low in this election. I'm surprised the list does not include whether I caused the eruption of Mt. St. Helens.

"I find it hard to believe Rep. Beard would scoop to such a disgraceful and underhanded thing, particularly since he recently expressed outrage when a colleague questioned whether Mr. Beard himself might be responsible for a major intelligence leak."

Alfred Friendly, press spokesman for the National Security Council, noted that the CIA has informed the Senate com-

mittee that there is no evidence that anyone exposed the agency's most valuable spy in Russia, a man code-named Trigon. Despite those assurances the panel is conducting an investigation.

TRIGON WAS THE highest-ranking Soviet government official in the CIA's employ and his spy career ended abruptly in 1977 when the Soviet secret police discovered his agent role.

Sources close to the Senate Intelligence Committee said the Trigon probe focuses on whether someone inadvertently leaked the existence of the agent during a social chat with a Romanian diplomat just after President Carter took office in 1977.

THE CIA REPORTEDLY communicated with Trigon by leaving and collecting messages at a drop point under a bridge in Moscow.

The spy was arrested there in 1977 and Martha Peterson, a CIA official assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, was arrested later at the same site. The Soviet press reported she had left a quantity of gold, a miniature camera, a large amount of Russian money, several poison ampules, and spy devices in the cache.

Peterson, due to her diplomatic immunity at the embassy, was expelled from the Soviet Union and an employee of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Anatoly Filatov, then 37, reportedly was charged with trying to pick up the supplies she had left.

Most reports—but not all—indicate that Filatov was Trigon. Filatov reportedly was sentenced to 15 years for espionage. Some reports indicated he was executed two years ago.

A Senate Intelligence Committee spokesman said the investigation seeks to determine who was the source of the Trigon disclosure and whether Filatov was the spy.

THE SAME SENATE panel has opened a separate investigation into

CONTINUED

charges that Aaron leaked information about the Stealth bomber.

Reagan, former President Gerald Ford, and Van Cleave all have charged that the Stealth leak gave the Soviets at least 10 years advance warning about the U.S. bomber.

Stealth uses special paint, electronic gadgets, lightweight building materials, and special aircraft designs to make the plane invisible to radar.

When Rep. Beard opened a House investigation into the Stealth leak he was met by countercharges that he himself had made partisan leaks. He was charged with disclosing a top secret report indicating that the Soviets now can use missile silos to launch more than one rocket.

SALT II limits the number of launching devices rather than actual warheads. The ability to reuse silos would give the Soviets an edge over the U.S., where missile silos are destroyed during the launch of the rocket.

Aaron's defenders have noted that he made many enemies in the intelligence community because he served as a key Senate investigator during the mid-1970s probes of U.S. spy agency abuses.

They also note that many of his accusers are CIA supporters—Beard and Sen. Malcolm Wallop [R., Wyo.]—or hardline anti-Soviet Democrats including Sen. Daniel Moynihan of New York.

Aaron's foes counter that many of the leaks being questioned have a partisan ring. For example, one Beard associate noted that the leak about the U.S. using China to monitor Soviet rocket tests was made after Reagan had suggested a rapprochement with China's bitter foe, Taiwan.

The Stealth leak occurred as Carter's speech writers were seeking arguments to counter charges that the President had weakened national defense by scrapping the controversial B-1 bomber. Stealth, it was argued, would be much better than B-1.